

How to buy legit Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Here are some small pieces of advice that can guide your choices when choosing EV00.

1. Olive oil does not improve with age - look for a harvest date if available.

- Olive oil is perishable. The fresher the olive oil, the better its taste and its nutritional value.
- Look for a harvest date on the bottle, preferably within the last 18 months. This indicates when the olives were picked.
- Not all bottles have this, but if present, it's a good indication that the product is of high quality.
- A 'best by' date, while useful, is not necessarily the most meaningful piece of information. It serves more as an estimation of the consumption timeline, or how long the olive oil will last under optimal storage conditions.

2. Olive Oil is extremely sensitive to light and oxygen - pay attention to the bottle.

- Exposure to light and oxygen can seriously degrade the olive oil.
- Always look for packaging that protects the product.
 - The optimal choice would be a dark glass bottle, tin containers or other opaque packaging.
- Check for bottles with a tight seal to avoid air exposure.
- Avoid transparent packaging.

- After opening, store the oil in a cool, dark spot, and ensure it's tightly sealed to limit exposure to oxygen.

3. Not olive oils are the same - know your labels.

- Different olive oils have different flavors, quality, nutritional value.
- The term “Extra Virgin” on the label is critical if you want the highest quality.
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil undergoes an extraction process without heat or chemicals, solely with mechanical means.
- It adheres to strict internationally recognized standards, evaluated both chemically and by expert sensory panels.

4. Seek third party certifications

- Look for seals from reputable organizations. They serve as an additional control mechanism of quality and adherence to specific production standards.
- In the US these might include:
 - the California Olive Oil Council (COOC)
 - the North American Olive Oil Association (NAOOA)
- Other seals fall under the European Union “Protected Designation of Origin” program (PGI, PDO).
 - These certify that the olive oil has been produced in the specified region, usually according to the region’s traditional methods.

5. Place of Origin

- A sign of a good EVOO is details about the place of origin.
- As a rule of thumb, single origin olive oils are usually better than blends from multiple regions.

- Be careful of words like 'Product of' on the label
 - While not necessarily misleading, these might refer to the bottling location - not the place of growth.
- Look for abbreviations of the country of origin on the back of the bottle
 - These might include IT for Italy, GR for Greece, ES for Spain.

6. Be wary of the terms

- Beware of terms like 'pure' and 'light'.
- While they don't necessarily mean that the olive oil is bad, they usually mean that the olive oil has been refined.
- These terms are not legally regulated (while 'Extra Virgin' is) and they don't convey any meaningful information about the quality of the olive oil.

7. Scrutinize the back label

- The more info there is on the back label, the better.
- Look for things like Free fatty acidity (FFA)
 - the lower, the better
 - EV00 should have $FFA < 0.8$
- Less frequently, you might find indications about the polyphenol levels
 - Polyphenol content in EV00s typically ranges between 50 and 2000 mg/kg in EV00s. Polyphenols are credited with many of the health benefits linked with EV00 such as antioxidant properties and cardiovascular health support.
 - EV00s with higher polyphenol concentration also tend to have a more intense, bitter flavor.

- Keep in mind however that measuring polyphenols in olive oil is far from trivial and their concentration decreases over time.
- As a rule of thumb, the more details on the back label, the better. They signal a desire for transparency by the producer. Details about the olive variety and the location of the farm provide more insight into the product's authenticity and quality.

Sources and additional reading material:

[How to Choose the Best Olive Oil: Expert Tips | OliveOil.com](#)

[How to Buy Olive Oil: A Beginner's Guide | Bon Appétit \(bonappetit.com\)](#)

[How to Buy Good Olive Oil and Use It \(foodandwine.com\)](#)

[How to Spot Fake Olive Oil - Brightland](#)

[How to Read an Extra Virgin Olive Oil Label | OliveOil.com](#)

[5 expert tips for buying olive oil \(aboutoliveoil.org\)](#)

[What to Look for When Buying Olive Oil \(allrecipes.com\)](#)

[What Are Polyphenols and Why Should You Care? - Olive Oil Times](#)

[Slick Extra Virgin » Polyphenols in Extra Virgin Olive Oil - Measurement and Effects \(aromadictionary.com\)](#)